

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 541

By Coley

A RESOLUTION to honor Steve Cropper as one of the greatest guitarists, songwriters, producers, and musical artists of all time.

WHEREAS, music has always been the lifeblood of Tennessee, from the Mississippi Delta to the Appalachian Mountains, and this General Assembly takes great pride in the gifted musicians who call Tennessee home; and

WHEREAS, truly the Renaissance man of popular music, Steve "The Colonel" Cropper is a legendary figure in the genesis and growth of American rhythm & blues music, from his early career with Memphis's Stax Records to the present; and

WHEREAS, born on a farm near Dora, Missouri, Mr. Cropper was exposed to a wealth of country music before moving to Memphis at the age of nine; and

WHEREAS, captivated by the sounds of Gospel, R&B, and Rock 'n' Roll that echoed throughout Memphis, Mr. Cropper developed a deep love of music and acquired his first guitar at the age of fourteen; and

WHEREAS, inspired by guitar legends Tal Farlow, Chuck Berry, Jimmy Reed, Chet Atkins, Lowman Pauling, and Billy Butler, Mr. Cropper began his career in music as a member of the Royal Spades and the Mar-Keys, and after cultivating his musical skills, he debuted on *American Bandstand* in 1961; and

WHEREAS, one year later, Mr. Cropper helped found a R&B groove machine with Booker T. Jones, the late Al Jackson, and Lewie Steinberg (later replaced by bassist Donald "Duck" Dunn) known as Booker T. and the MG's; the group produced such hit albums as *Green Onions*, *Soul Dressing*, and many others under the Stax Records label and served as the house band on most Stax recordings; and

WHEREAS, renowned for his "money licks" as a guitarist and songwriter, Steve Cropper helped create a sound on the "Green Onions" single that has since become iconic in American popular music; the single propelled both the group and Mr. Cropper to stardom; and

WHEREAS, in the years following the success of the MG's, Mr. Cropper established himself as not only an extraordinary guitarist and songwriter, but also as a stellar A&R man, a talented engineer, and a successful producer; he was involved in virtually every record issued by Stax from 1961 through 1970; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cropper collaborated with various other writers to produce many R&B classics, co-writing "Knock on Wood," with Eddie Floyd; "In the Midnight Hour," with Wilson Pickett; and "(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay," with the late, great Otis Redding; and

WHEREAS, as a renowned producer, Mr. Cropper generated timeless tracks by such notable artists as Tower of Power, John Mellencamp, Jose Feliciano, Poco, John Prine, Otis Redding, Ringo Starr, and John Lennon; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cropper left the Stax label in the fall of 1970 to start the Trans-Maximus recording studio and record company along with Jerry Williams and former Mar-Keys band mate Ronnie Stoots; and

WHEREAS, this distinguished guitarist has since lent his talents to the albums of Rod Stewart, Peter Frampton, Art Garfunkel, Ringo Starr, and Wynonna Judd and has toured with Neil Young, Jimmy Buffet, and Levon Helm's RCO All-Stars; and

WHEREAS, after briefly reuniting with the MG's in 1977, Mr. Cropper joined with the Blues Brothers Band in the late 1970s and appeared in several major motion pictures, notably *The Blues Brothers*, and on numerous television shows; and

WHEREAS, the MG's reunited once again in 1990 to tour with Neil Young, and in 1994, they released their first album in twenty years; the "Cruisin" cut from *That's the Way it Should Be* won a Grammy for Best Pop Instrumental Performance at the 37th Annual Grammy Awards; and

WHEREAS, after being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992, Booker T. & The MG's, now featuring Duck Dunn and Willie Hall in addition to Jones and Cropper, served as the house band for Bob Dylan's 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his ongoing commitment with the MG's and the Blues Brothers, Mr. Cropper organized his own label, "Play it, Steve! Records"; and

WHEREAS, currently a resident of Nashville, Steve Cropper continues to be a prominent figure on the national music scene and has been honored with an induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the Rhythm and Blues Hall of Fame, the Songwriters Hall of Fame, and the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame and garnered recognition as the greatest living guitarist by *Mojo Magazine*; and

WHEREAS, still in great demand, Mr. Cropper has showcased his musical genius on albums by Paul Simon, Ringo Starr, Buddy Guy, and Johnny Lang, as well as contributing to works by Elton John and Steppenwolf; and

WHEREAS, Steve Cropper's excellence as a musician and artist is exceeded only by his compassion and generosity as a human being, and we feel most fortunate to count him as a former Memphian, present Nashvillian, and forever Tennessean; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor Steve Cropper as one of the greatest musical artists, songwriters, and producers of all time, salute his influential work as the greatest rhythm & blues guitarist ever and a founding member of the legendary Booker T. & The MG's and Stax Records, and extend to Mr. Cropper our best wishes for much continued success in his present and future musical projects as we encourage him to "Play it, Steve!".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.